



David J. Della
Seattle City Councilmember

SEATTLE PERSPECTIVE

Getting Things Done & Getting Seattle Working Again

Newsletter from Seattle City Councilmember David Della

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INTRODUCTION

2005 has gotten off to a fast and furious start for me and the other members of your Seattle City Council. Indeed, things are looking upbeat as we work to implement the Families and Education Levy, keep Seattle Center vibrant, and keep Seattle City Light headed in the right direction. In this edition of *Seattle Perspective*, you'll read about developments in all of these areas and more.

It is an honor and a privilege to serve as your Seattle City Councilmember. I hope that you'll feel free to contact me to share your thoughts on city issues that are important to you. I look forward to hearing from you and continuing to work with you to get things done and get Seattle working again.

Sincerely,

Councilmember David J. Della

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ENERGY

My priorities in this area in the coming year will focus on strengthening the financial condition of Seattle City Light (SCL), improving SCL's risk management process and setting a fair and rational rate setting process. Our publicly owned utility is one of the greatest assets of this City. I have been meeting on a regular basis with SCL Superintendent Jorge Carrasco and have been working closely with the chair of the Energy and Environmental Policy Committee, Councilmember Jean Godden, to come up with proposals to address the long-term financial stability of SCL, ensure that the recommendations of the SCL Advisory Board regarding management changes within SCL are implemented, as well as set the basis for the Council's rate setting process this summer.

City Light Financial Policies & Rate Review

Over the past few weeks, I, along with the members of the Energy and Environmental Policy Committee, have been absorbed in reviewing and revising SCL's financial policies. The SCL Advisory Board published its recommendations in January 2005. I agree with their recommendations, especially with respect to improving and strengthening SCL's financial policies. Given the Council's experience with the energy crisis in 2000, I am well aware of the pitfalls we must avoid.

For example, the SCL Advisory Board recommended establishing an explicit target for the percentage of SCL's total capital to be funded by long-term debt, and increasing the required amount of SCL's contingency cash reserve, i.e. City Light's "rainy day fund", from \$25 million to \$100 million. This level of cash reserve is more in line with the "rainy day fund" maintained by well-rated public utilities. In addition, lowering the debt ratio with respect to

funding SCL's capital expenses to 60 percent is a good start and the Council must insist that SCL wean itself from relying on debt to finance its capital projects at the current level of close to 85 percent.

We are still reeling from the effects of the energy crisis in 2000 and 2001. With the continuing dry winter weather and low streamflows, SCL will continue to face significant challenges in implementing the financial plans recommended by its Advisory Board. However, it is imperative that SCL adheres to these financial goals if we are to achieve financial stability and sustainability for our public utility.

I need to hear your thoughts on your publicly owned utility – Seattle City Light. We want to work with you to establish rates that are fair, stable and sustainable.

In the meantime, SCL is hosting two upcoming workshops. I hope that you will consider attending and participating in them. One will be held on April 13th and will deal with cost allocation. The second is scheduled on May 11th and will focus on rate design. Both of these workshops will be at City Hall in the Bertha Knight Landes Room, from 4:00-6:30 PM.

PUBLIC SAFETY

Together, We Will Take our Community Back

During the course of summer and fall of last year, there was a string of strong-arm robberies targeting elderly citizens. While this series of street robberies primarily targeted citizens who were older, I want to make sure that Seattle's residents, regardless of age, feel safe in our neighborhoods.

As a first response to these incidents, I initiated a community dialogue on

December 9th where members of the community met with representatives of – the City and the Seattle Police Department. Staff from the: Seattle Police Department, Transit Police, and Department of Neighborhoods were on hand to listen and respond to questions, concerns, and suggestions for making neighborhoods safe again. Councilmembers Jean Godden, Nick Licata, Richard J. McIver and Tom Rasmussen joined me at the forum.

This past February, Seattle Police Department (SPD) staff provided an update to the Public Safety, Civil Rights & Arts Committee. SPD staff reported that as of last November, they apprehended nine people for involvement in these attacks.

Since late last year, the number of these incidents has dropped significantly. In response to these strong-arm robberies, SPD staff is working on improving how they communicate with the community. This February, they distributed their first e-newsletter. To subscribe to the e-newsletter please contact Mark Solomon, Seattle Police Department Crime Prevention, at (206) 386-9766 or

Mark.Solomon@seattle.gov



(King County Councilmember Larry Gossett, King County Prosecutor Norm Maleng and I joined volunteers from the Asian & Pacific Islander Women and Family Safety Center in holding a candlelight vigil for victims of domestic violence)

PARKS, NEIGHBORHOODS & EDUCATION

Pro Parks Projects

Through Seattle voters' dedication to and appreciation of parks, our City adopted a Pro Parks Levy that provides \$16 million to purchase land for 18 new neighborhood parks in many of Seattle's most densely developed neighborhoods, and \$10 million to preserve green spaces.

As Chair of the Parks, Neighborhoods and Education Committee, I am proud to see the number of new parks that we have opened in our neighborhoods throughout the City – all as a direct result of the Pro Parks Levy. I also led the passage of legislation for two such projects over the course of the past couple of months – the Alki substation addition property at 51st Avenue SW & SW Pritchard St.; and the California substation property, located at 4304 SW Dakota St.

The Alki substation addition property is next to another piece of property that was identified as a pro parks project, which was long sought by the community and listed in the Admiral Neighborhood Plan. This additional property will help preserve visual access to the entire park and make it more accessible to the neighborhood.

The California substation property was highly valued by the West Seattle Junction community, who identified it during the neighborhood planning process as a property that should be retained for community use and turned into a park. This acquisition is the result of collaboration between the Parks Department and Seattle City Light. City Light removed substation equipment and the Parks Department cleaned up the site to comply with applicable environmental laws. This parcel of land is now ready to be transformed into a new park that will include a community meeting facility.

These two properties will make great new neighborhood parks for all to enjoy!

Seattle Center, Neighbor to the World's Largest Foundation

I co-chaired a Committee of the Whole of the City Council to consider and review the sale of a Seattle Center surplus property to the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. I led in passing this legislation, which will secure a permanent home for the world's largest foundation in our city.

Under the agreement adopted by the City Council, Seattle Center will sell 12.3 acres of surplus property, commonly referred to as 'Lot 2', to the Gates Foundation. As a result of the sale, Seattle Center will be able to pay off a debt of around \$10 million owed to the City; build a new 1,000 stall parking garage; issue a \$4 million challenge grant to help retire the construction debt for McCaw Hall; and have \$8 million in reserve. Seattle Center will also benefit from environmental remediation of Lot 2, receive a revenue stream from the new parking garage, and have opportunities to rent out facilities to the Gates Foundation. This sale will be a tremendous step in the right direction in shoring up Seattle Center in the long run. In addition, I added specific language to the legislation that restricts spending of proceeds deposited in Seattle Center's reserve fund until the Seattle Center presents a strategic business plan to the Council that includes specific steps to address the Center's financial sustainability.

This sale is a fair deal based on market rate assessments. Seattle Center lacked the resources to clean up and develop the property. As a result of the sale, Seattle Center will now have a new neighbor who can develop the property and more importantly, whose mission is

aligned with that of the Center. This transaction is a win-win for Seattle Center, the Gates Foundation and most importantly, the people of Seattle.



(Dishing up eggs at the Annual First Hill Lion's Club Pancake Benefit Breakfast)

Helping Neighborhoods Create their Best Futures

One of the things I enjoy most about being your Councilmember is the opportunity to visit with you and to understand what works well and what improvements could be made in your neighborhood. Since I've taken office, I've attended (at least twice) each of the Neighborhood District Council and City Neighborhood Council meetings. I enjoyed meeting each of you and listening to your concerns and issues. Now, I want to scratch below that surface.

Recently, I initiated *Della Neighborhood Visits and Walking Tours*, with the support of the Department of Neighborhood's Neighborhood District Coordinators. So far, I have visited Lake City and Delridge, each one special and unique in their own right. I continue to be inspired by the dedication of community leaders in these neighborhoods. Over the coming months, I will continue to embark upon several other *Della Neighborhood Visits and Walking Tours*. I look forward to seeing and working with you in your neighborhood.

PARKS, NEIGHBORHOODS & EDUCATION

City Council Partners with Seattle Public Schools on a Win-Win for our Schools and City

Over the past couple of months, I initiated, along with Council President Drago and Councilmember Richard J. McIver, an agreement between the city and Seattle Public Schools to provide supplemental analytical staff assistance to the School District as it faces difficult budgetary deliberations.

Under this agreement, which was unanimously adopted by the City Council, city staff will be given the opportunity to sharpen their skills in a new environment and learn more about neighborhood demographics, resources and needs.

This partnership will provide much needed expertise for the Seattle Public School District as it faces these difficult times and will provide the City with beneficial demographic and analytical information about our neighborhoods.

The agreement runs from March 29 through July 29, 2005, with an option to extend the agreement to September 1, 2005 with the approval of both the Seattle Public Schools and the City.



(Rep. Phyllis Gutierrez Kenney, Chair of the House Higher Education Committee, and I spoke at a Diversity Fair earlier this year. The Fair was sponsored by the N. District Council and held at Olympic Hills Elementary)



Families & Education Levy – Oversight Committee Appointments & Implementation

Another dynamic partnership that exists between the Seattle Public School District and the City is the Families and Education Levy. When the City Council approved the levy package to send to voters, we strengthened citizen participation in the implementation by doubling the size of the Levy Oversight Committee to eight citizen representatives.

I was excited to work with my Council colleagues to appoint: Someireh Amirfaiz, Executive Director of the Refugee Women's Association; Marie Kurose, a proud parent and a Program Officer of Paul G. Allen Foundation; David Okimoto, Vice President of Community Services with United Way of King County; and Dr. Debra Ren-Etta Sullivan, President of Praxis Institute for Early Childhood Education.

I was also pleased to work with the Mayor to confirm his appointees: Dr. Frances Contreras, an assistant professor of education at the University of Washington whose research focus is on the links between K-12 and higher education, with an emphasis on equity and access; Kris Hildebrandt, Director of Grants and Community Programs at Group

Health Community Foundation; Antonio Hopson, a middle school biology and earth science teacher at Lakeside High School; and John Pehrson, a retired Boeing engineer and former levy oversight committee member.

All of the appointees are dynamic and distinguished community leaders who bring a wealth and diversity of knowledge and experience to the table.

As co-chair of the Levy Oversight Committee, we are reviewing the plans proposed by the Mayor for implementing the Families and Education Levy. The proposed implementation plans are also under Council consideration and review.

We will be holding a public hearing on the proposed levy implementation plans on the evening of Wednesday, April 20, from 5:30-7:30 PM in Council Chambers. In the meantime, I hope that you will call, e-mail or write to me to share your thoughts on the proposed plans.

Additionally, I wanted to report that I had the privilege of attending the Campana Quetzal – 1st Annual Latino Education Summit. This event was well attended by many community leaders and concerned and devoted parents. The number of Latino students attending Seattle public schools is increasing. I am committed to working with my colleagues on the City Council and on the Levy Oversight Committee to ensure that the levy meets the needs of all of Seattle's diverse communities and families.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Developments in Southeast Seattle

Over the years, there has been a focus on developing Downtown, Northgate and South Lake Union. I want to ensure that City resources are also being used to develop other parts of the City including Southeast Seattle. Many proposals are being reviewed by the City Council. One of these solutions focuses on the \$50 million community-development fund for mitigating the effects of the construction of the Sound Transit stations along Martin Luther King Jr. Way in Southeast Seattle. So far this fund has invested nearly \$4 million dollars to assist 69 businesses. During City Council's review of legislation that ensures payment of these funds, I successfully fought against efforts to delay payments from the Fund. I firmly believe that the Rainier Valley area is already feeling the impacts of growth and construction and they need help now, not later.

Working to Secure Good Paying Jobs with Benefits

Keeping and creating livable wage jobs in Seattle's neighborhoods is critical to the quality of life and health of our city. Since I've been in office, I have fully supported several pieces of key legislation that were vital in this effort. I am committed to continuing to work towards creating and preserving livable wage jobs and providing opportunities for workforce training and development.

Additionally, I continue to work on economic development issues on a broad scale and in cooperation with other public, private and community-based entities. I was just re-elected to the post of Public Sector Boardmember for *Enterprise Seattle*. The mission of this non-profit organization is to retain and recruit family wage jobs in King County by helping businesses thrive, while attracting new opportunities.

I also serve as co-chair of the *Puget Sound Industrial Excellence Center (PSIEC)*. PSIEC is the result of collaboration between Business, Industry and Education. A major goal of the PSIEC is to add services to assist local businesses, with a particular focus on manufacturing, construction and transportation industries.

Protecting Strong & Healthy Communities

Earlier this year, the Bush Administration released its proposed 2006 Budget and it was not kind to many programs that are critical to many of our communities who most need our help. Among many proposed reductions, the President's budget would cripple the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG). For the past 30 years, the CDBG has funded programs that assisted hundreds of thousands of Seattle residents and helped build strong and healthy communities.

All across the country, citizens have gathered to oppose these proposed cuts. I, along with my City Council colleagues, joined them by organizing a very successful public rally, sponsored by more than 50 community-based organizations, at City Hall on March 10th. The purpose of this rally was to "sound the alarm" on the proposed CDBG cuts. There were more than 200 people who joined us to send a clear message to Congress -- we strongly oppose any CDBG cuts! The rally was also a gathering to send off 30 Puget Sound officials, including myself, to the National League of Cities conference in Washington, D.C. There, I met with many key congressional leaders and I expressed the sentiments of my constituents in strongly opposing these draconian cuts.



(Councilmembers participating in the Groundbreaking Ceremony for the Pike Place Market LaSalle-Creamery Development Project)

HAPPENINGS

As Chair of the Parks, Neighborhoods and Education Committee, it has been my distinct pleasure to participate in many exciting events throughout the City. These events have included:

- ✓ Groundbreaking on the Historic Cooper School – this building will be revitalized and turned into a cultural hub for all to enjoy.
- ✓ The dedication of a brand-new Yesler Community Center – this beautiful facility was made possible from the support of the 1999 Community Center Levy and will be home to many community activities for years to come.
- ✓ Groundbreaking ceremony for the Pike Place Market-LaSalle Creamery Development Project – this project will rehabilitate several historic buildings and create additional commercial space, a new home for the Pike Place Market Senior Center, and additional low-income housing at the Market.
- ✓ Groundbreaking ceremony for the brand-new Northgate Community Center, Library, and Park

COUNCILMEMBER DELLA'S CALENDAR

Following is a sampling of future events where I'll be. I hope to see you there!

April 16th, 10:30 AM

Kiwanis Ravine Overlook, Magnolia

Kiwanis Ravine Ribbon Cutting

April 19th, 7:00 PM

University Lutheran Church

University Park Community Club Quarterly Meeting

April 21st, 11:30 AM

Outback Steakhouse, 701 Westlake Ave. N.

Queen Anne Chamber of Commerce Monthly Meeting

April 29th, 9:30 AM—11:30 AM

Council Chambers, City Hall

Joint City/ Schools Committee Meeting – a meeting of Seattle City Councilmembers and Seattle Public School Board Directors

April 30th, 9:30 AM

International District/ Chinatown Community Center

Annual Rainbow Bookfest – Celebrating Authors of Color

Please feel free to call my office (206-684-8806) for further details on any of the above events!